

LEW YUEN WAE

ADAPTED FROM THE CHINESE

BY

MISS PAX ROBERTSON

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A FOREWORD BY THE PUBLISHER

IN publishing this play, I do so mainly as a small token of my appreciation of the work of the Pax Robertson Salon and it has occurred to me that some of us who enjoy the Sunday evenings when interesting, but not always well-known plays are interpreted for us, may wish for some record of these. I offer this Chinese Play hoping that the response to my suggestion may make it possible for me to publish further small volumes from time to time.

EDITH PLACE.

7 March 1924 J. W.

BVT

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PREFACE

OF the many foreign plays produced at my Salon, this twelfth century Chinese is one of the most interesting. It is a simply told domestic story, giving us an insight into the salient national characteristics. Here the great Chinese virtue, filial piety, the dreaded misfortune, the lack of a son and the moral and social support of polygamy, when the first wife is unfortunate enough not to have a son, are all clearly shown in this drama of an elderly Chinese squire, for so the title Yuen Wae after his surname Lew indicates him to be.

I think a few explanations of various customs of the country will be helpful towards a better understanding of the play. For instance, in the first scene, Lew speaks of his nephew having brought his mother's bones with him. This is literally done. When a Chinaman moves to another town, he takes the coffins of his parents with him in order that he may inter them near by and so be able to pay the yearly tribute of a son at their tombs.

Then again, Lew tells his wife that should his second wife have a son, it would be hers. This is so. All children born to her husband by inferior wives are considered to belong to the first wife and call her mother. These second wives are, by the way, usually chosen from among the poor relations. Lew also says that he may sell the second wife if she so chooses. Slavery is a recognised thing but it is usually done by private contract and supposed to be by consent of the party sold, and all second wives, even when they have sons, are slaves in the house of the first wife, who rules in everything concerning the family. To marry the first wife, there must be "go between": that is, persons

who arrange the marriage between the two families, marriage presents, the equivalent of the dowry and witnesses, otherwise it is not legal, but for a second wife no ceremony is necessary.

The nephew in one scene accuses Chang-Lang of hiding some money in his sleeve. As the Chinese do not have pockets, they use the turned-up fold of their sleeves as such, also the turned-up flap of their long boots.

The Chinese never mention death directly, but put it far from them, as Lew, when speaking to his wife at the Place of the Tombs: "A hundred years hence when we shall be buried." They are also very careful about the aspect their tombs shall face and consult soothsayers and priests carefully on this point. A hillside is considered to be desirable and is planted with fir and cypress. The tombs are most ornate and unlike any architecture used elsewhere; goats, tigers and almost any animal being carved on them.

The Tsing-ming is mentioned. This is one of the Tsee-ke or twenty-four divisions of the year. Chang-Lang in one passage tells his wife that she is like a mother to him. This is the greatest compliment from a Chinese. In another place Le-She speaks of Yin-Sun's childish name. All Chinese parents are convinced that the Gods must envy them the possession of a son so they give the child a meaningless name in the hope that the gods will be deceived regarding the child's sex until it has grown to young manhood when it is deemed safe for him to assume his proper name.

Yin-Sun talks about heating the wine. This is done throughout China; they prefer their liquor hot. The reason of the great desire all Chinese have for a son is this: a daughter will marry and thus belong to another family, whereas a son does not change his estate and is therefore under an obligation to come each year to his family tombs and provide a feast for the shades of his ancestors who would otherwise starve. If he is a good son, he comes much more often, so a son is a safeguard against starvation in the other world, hence their great anxiety.

Reference is made by Lew of Leang-hoy and Ming-Kuang, the Romeo and Juliet of China. Le-She sarcastically calls for wet clay to put on Yin-Sun's head. This is done sometimes in the case of very young children to protect the frontal bone.

The Chinese from their earliest times have had a drama of their own, but public theatres are commercially impossible since all court officials, the police and nearly everyone in an official position, would have the right of free entrance, so their entertainments are given by what we would call strolling players. All large houses have a hall set aside for entertainments and they hire them when they want them. The poorer classes subscribe amongst themselves and the Company build their own theatre. This is a simple matter; a few bamboos as posts support a roof of mats; a floor of boards raised six or seven feet from the ground, painted cotton enclosing the sides, and the theatre is ready. No scenery is ever used, no matter where they perform. The imagination of the audience is largely called upon, for actors take the place of stone walls, the sea, or anything that the scene requires, and the chief actor explains what is intended. To us, a line of men crouching down as a wall while others clamber over them in the supposed assault on a castle, would be extremely funny but to a Chinese audience that line of men really would be a wall. The chief actor would have announced the fact.

I now close this little prologue to let the curtain rise on this drama from the East.

PAX ROBERTSON,

Director of the Pax Robertson Salon.

Chelsea Art Theatre,
Bedford Hall, Upper Manor Street,
Chelsea.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

LEW TSHUNG SHEN, titled Lew Yuen Wae.

LE-SHE .. His wife.

SEAOU-MEI .. His second wife.

YIN-CHANG .. His daughter.

CHANG-LANG .. His son-in-law, her husband.

YIN-SUN .. Lew's nephew.

HING-WEH .. Lew's servant.

FIRST BEGGAR.

SECOND BEGGAR.

A CHILD BEGGAR.

A CHILD.

A VILLAGE OFFICER.

LEW YUEN WAE

OPENING.

LEW TSHUNG SHEN *enters from behind the curtain followed by his wife, LE-SHE, SEAOU-MEI, YIN-CHANG, CHANG-LANG and YIN-SUN.*

(During LEW's speech, as each one is mentioned, he or she comes forward and bows, thus: LE-SHE comes forward, bows and goes back to her place; YIN-CHANG comes forward and bows; CHANG-LANG comes forward and bows and then stands on a line just a little forward of YIN-CHANG.)

LEW *(comes forward and speaks)*: I am a man of Tung-Ping-Foo. My surname is Lew. My name is Tsung-Shen. I am sixty years of age and Le-She, my wife, is fifty-eight. My daughter, Yin-Chang, her age is twenty-seven, and that of her husband, Chang-Lang, is thirty. I once had a brother named Lew-Tsung-Taou, whose only son, in his infancy, was called Yin-Sun *(sighs)*. This child has a most unhappy destiny. My brother died early and left a widow. As she and my wife could not agree together, my sister-in-law wished, with her son, to spend the days of mourning with her own family. Thus she might, in the first place, depend on her parents for support, and secondly, by the labour of her hands, procure something towards her son's education. Soon afterwards this sister-in-law suddenly died and left her son destitute. His relatives thereupon thus spoke to him: "What are you doing here, child? Have you not an uncle at Tung-Ping-Foo well known to everyone? Why do you not go to him?" They gave the youth some money for the journey.

He came to Tung-Ping-Foo to seek me, bringing his mother's bones with him, and I had them deposited with those of my brother. This young man is now twenty-five but alas, that wife of mine still remembers her quarrel with his mother. On every slight occasion she abuses him and frequently causes him to be beaten. She cannot bear even the sight of my nephew.

LE-SHE (*coming forward*): What say you? I cannot bear the sight of your nephew?

LEW: Oh, don't raise a disturbance. It is only my way of talking. Don't let the people in the street laugh at us.

(LEW exits R. LE-SHE, when passing SEAOU-MEI is very haughty. SEAOU-MEI bows very low as she passes. All the characters slowly exit round the opposite side of the curtain in the order they entered, SEAOU-MEI humbly waiting for them all to pass first; she bows especially low as LE-SHE passes her. When all have passed she, too, disappears behind the curtain.)

ACT I.

SCENE: A richly furnished room in LEW's house. LEW and LE-SHE are seen seated at a table. LE-SHE is smoking. The son-in-law, CHANG-LANG, is standing at the back of the stage and YIN-SUN is standing near LEW in a respectful attitude, listening to him.

LEW (*to nephew*): Yin-Sun, you have sense enough to perceive, and it is useless for me to prove, that you cannot live here. On my estate there are two thatched cottages. You may have one cleared out for yourself, and earn a livelihood by giving instruction to the village children.

LE-SHE: I wish to retain those cottages for the purpose of keeping my asses in them.

LEW: What do you want with asses?

LE-SHE: Want? I want them for cultivating my ground, for grinding and winnowing my corn, also for my own riding. How then can I do without them? So don't you meddle with my concerns. However, you may give the fellow one of the cottages.

LEW: Well, then, one will do. Chang-Lang, do thou count out two hundred ounces of silver and give them to Yin-Sun.

CHANG: Very well (*goes up to table at back*).

LE-SHE: What? Do we owe him this money? He shall not have two hundred ounces. I will only allow him one hundred.

LEW: You must be obeyed. One hundred will do.

CHANG (*languidly weighs the money, glances at the others and sees that they are not watching, slips part of the money in his sleeve, putting the rest in two little silken bags*). So he is to have one hundred ounces of silver? (*aside*) As he is no calculator, I will just keep twenty for myself. (*Hands bags of money to YIN-SUN; his manner is supercilious and the tone of his voice mocking.*) Poor Yin-Sun, you will come to nothing in this world. When I have given you this money, you will soon squander it away.

LEW: Now you have this money, be careful of it, Yin-Sun and think out some plan for your livelihood.

YIN-SUN (*bows to all his relations and goes to the door*): Thanks to you all my relations. (*aside*) My uncle would have given me two hundred ounces of silver but that aunt of mine prevented him so I have only got one hundred. Chang-Lang was told to count them for me, and I have known him to be given to nipping off the corners for himself so I will count them again. Sixty ounces, seventy, eighty. There are only eighty ounces. I will instantly inform my uncle. (*He comes back to LEW holding out the money.*)

LE-SHE (*looks up angrily at this nephew she hates*): How then? Do you dare to reject the money? Well, if you do not want it, return it to me.

YIN-SUN : I wished to ask my uncle how much money he ordered to be given to me.

LEW : I ordered you one hundred ounces.

YIN-SUN : And I have only got eighty.

LEW : Chang-Lang, you were desired to give Yin-Sun one hundred ounces. How happens it that you gave him only eighty? Have you kept the other twenty yourself?

CHANG : Father, I gave him one hundred ounces.

YIN-SUN : Here is the money. Do you count it.

CHANG : Give it to me and I will count it. Seventy, eighty, and (*shaking the rest from his sleeve*) is not the money here? You have made a mistake of twenty ounces.

YIN-SUN : (*up to CHANG-LANG, cross him to door lower L.*) : It is you, Chang-Lang, who have made the mistake. You have just shaken them from your sleeve, but now I leave your doors and though I should be dying of cold and hunger, I will never enter them again (*exit*).

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE.—Outside Lew's house. Yin-Sun is coming slowly from the gate to the courtyard.

YIN-SUN : My uncle, for the sake of my father, is willing to pay me some regard but my aunt favours her son-in-law, Chang-Lang. He who is so well off is surnamed Chang, while I who am so persecuted am surnamed Lew. Alas, Yin-Sun, why dost thou inveigh against others when thou shouldst be lamenting thy own unlucky destiny?

Mournfully now I vent my sighs,
And thus I wander homeless and forlorn ;
The crafty alien claims connubial ties,
From the needy kinsman all hope is shorn (*exit*).

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE—Same room as before in Lew's house. At rise, Lew is seen walking backwards and forwards, talking to himself.

LEW : So Yin-Sun has gone. I intended to divide my property equally between my daughter and my nephew, considering in my own mind that when once a man has attained the age of eight times eight, or sixty-four, and a woman that of seven times seven, or forty-nine, they are not likely to have any more children. And I have only four years to reach that period. But Seaou-Mei, my second wife, is now to have a child, but whether a boy or girl, I know not. I am afraid that the rest of my family, looking only to my property, may change their disposition towards her. Therefore I shall speak out my mind to them now. (*calling*) Chang-Lang.

LE-SHE *enters and goes to seat herself near the table, and lights her pipe. She is followed by CHANG-LANG and YIN-CHANG, his wife, also by SEAOU-MEI, who enters meekly and stands at the back.*

LE-SHE : Now your nephew has gone, you begin to think about your son-in-law.

LEW : Do you know what I am going to say to him ?

LE-SHE : Not I. What is it that you wish to say ?

LEW : You have now been my son-in-law these ten years past. My wife and I have become old without having a son. How then could you bear to leave us alone ? From this day forward, take up your abode here.

LE-SHE : Children, you owe your thanks to your father.

(*CHANG-LANG and his wife, YIN-CHANG bow to their parents.*)

LEW : You see, wife, they are very well satisfied. Chang-Lang, bring me the account book which contains all the money due to me, that I may see what the sum total amounts to.

CHANG-LANG *goes to a table at the back and brings the book.*

CHANG : Here is the book, sir.

LEW : Seaou-Mei, bring me a lighted lamp.

SEAOU-MEI : Here is the light.

LEW : Thus I burn and destroy the whole. (CHANG-LANG *tries to snatch the papers from the flames.*) So you are not afraid of burning your fingers ? What would you with the papers ?

LE-SHE : When I remember that your trading schemes in your younger days took you to the farthest North and South, that you travelled the canals in boats and rode over the country on horseback, that you crossed rivers and even the sea and have lent out money, obtained bonds as security. How is it then that you now count it so little that you would destroy the whole in a blaze ?

LEW : What was the necessity of calculating such small sums ? Don't you consider that I am worth one hundred thousand ounces ?

LE-SHE : Yes, and more.

LEW : I mean now to take my money and divide it equally, giving one half to you, my children, and the other half I shall deliver, wife, to you.

LE-SHE : Children, return thanks to your father.

CHANG : Father, receive our thanks.

(YIN-CHANG bows, looking very pleased and goes off with CHANG-LANG. SEAOU-MEI takes away the lamp and also goes out. LEW walks up and down for a little and once or twice glances uneasily at his wife. LE-SHE pretends not to notice although she knows well the difficulty he has in speaking of the matter worrying him.)

LEW : They are well pleased, you see. Wife, take good care of one half of the money. Everyone in Tung-Ping-Foo says of me : " That old man is rich to no purpose. He cannot part with anything. He is a miserly slave." I am now determined to make use of my money and to pass a few jovial years with my friends.

LE-SHE : You are right, husband. You are very right.

LEW : I will spend a few days at my country house.

LE-SHE : I will give instructions to prepare a horse for you. (*Goes up R to the door and gives an order to the servant.*) When you are gone, you need not concern yourself about the family affairs. As I am here, you may set your heart at rest on that score.

LEW : I have a word to say to you, wife. May I venture to say it ?

LE-SHE (*behind table*) : Whatever you have to say, speak on.

LEW (*up to table L.C.*) : I shall anxiously expect to receive a letter of congratulation. What may Seaou-Mei be compared to ? When I borrow a vessel from a neighbour in order to procure some wine, I need it only until I have obtained the wine and then I return the vessel to its owner. Seaou-Mei is about to bear a child, whether a boy or girl, it will be your property. You may use Seaou-Mei as a servant, or sell her, as best pleases you. The matter is entirely in your hands.

LE-SHE (*down R*) : You speak very rightly, husband.

LEW : Wife ?

LE-SHE : What have you to say ?

LEW (*comes down in front of table*) : The girl Seaou-Mei has sometimes been very troublesome to you, and I am afraid she will continue to annoy you. For my sake, however, when she deserves to be beaten, do you be satisfied with merely scolding her.

LE-SHE : It is unnecessary for you to instruct me. I know my duty.

LEW (*walks L. comes back R.C.*) : I wish to tell you with regard to Seaou-Mei that if she offends you and deserves a scolding, you may scold her as much as you please.

LE-SHE : You may be at rest. I tell you, I know what to do.

LEW (*goes up L. and down C.*) : Wife ?

LE-SHE : Well ? Something more about Seaou-Mei ?

LEW : Well, well, that is enough.

LE-SHE : What was your motive in taking the memorandums of what people owed you and burning them all ?

LEW : I had a motive indeed.

You ask me why with reckless hands

I gave a treasure to the flames,

It was to obey the God's commands,

And my penitence proclaim.

Three score years for wealth I've schemed,

But still no son my house adorns.

Now on me this hope has gleamed

That a son may be sent to a father who mourns.

To what may I be compared ? (*up L.*)

To an aged tree with withered arms

Outstretched in silent prayer,

And from its roots a green shoot springs

Out to meet the air.

But this Seaou-Mei, do you think, wife, that you can treat her kindly ? To what may she be compared ?

To a lotus flower bending low,

To the pool within whose depths she lies ;

But if the waters troubled grow,

The lotus flower droops and dies.

Take care, wife, you do not apply boiling water to it.

(*Enter CHANG.*)

LE-SHE : I know, I know. Son, do you attend your father to the cottage.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II.

SCENE.—The old man's house.

(YIN-CHANG is lying on a couch smoking. CHANG is seated in chair R. by little table.)

CHANG : My misfortune has reached me ere my happiness was complete. Why did I become the son-in-law of Lew-Tsung-Shen ? It was entirely on account of the old fellow's wealth and his having no son that I allied myself to the family. His money was my object. I did not consider the possibility of Seaou-Mei having a child. Now if it is a daughter, I shall have to give up half of my fortune. If a son, the whole of the fortune. I shall thus have made an empty bargain. This is the cause of my trouble.

YIN-CHANG : All this that you have said has occurred to me. How do you think I have contrived about Seaou-Mei ?

CHANG : Surely you are something more than wife to me ; you are like a mother. What have you thought of ?

(LE-SHE is heard talking off.)

YIN-CHANG : First I will tell my mother that Seaou-Mei, under pretence of going out to buy something, has disappeared altogether.

CHANG : An excellent idea.

YIN-CHANG : I will tell her so in your presence. (Goes to door and calls Mother.)

LE-SHE : (entering) What do you want with me, child ?

YIN-CHANG : Mother, Seaou-Mei went out this morning under pretence of buying something and has disappeared altogether.

LE-SHE : Alas no more. My old man, having some hopes of an heir at his great age, is happy beyond measure and at his cottage awaits a letter of congratulation. How has this unlucky business happened ? Surely you two have brought it about ?

YIN-CHANG: If Seaou-Mei took herself off early this morning, what affair is it of ours?

LE-SHE: If she has really gone—bring a carriage here. Do you two go straight with me to the cottage to inform my husband.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE—Lew's cottage in the country.

(Lew is seated at a table eating. During this scene, his servant HING brings and takes away little trays with small dishes of food, and finally after the tea, he brings his master's pipe and lights it with a piece of charcoal.)

LEW (to HING): Ever since my arrival here, I have been anxiously expecting a letter from home of congratulation. I have been reflecting that no being on earth can transgress the duties of his station without meeting with an awful retribution in his old age. If so, what have I to expect, who, in my younger days, while engaged in trade, rose early and slept late, bore every anxiety, and knew not that I was deceiving myself whilst I studied how to deceive others. I made use of what I had in seeking more, and got on in every way, both at home and abroad. The money came in abundantly. I now fear I cannot shake off the consequences of the injuries which I inflicted upon others. Hing-Weh, when you went into the town yesterday, what did you hear my friends say of me?

HING: Sir, I went to buy oil and heard some old gentlemen say: "that if you should have a daughter, well, but if a son, they would treat you like a horse until they make you a feast."

LEW: Don't deceive me, Hing-Weh.

HING: Sir, I dare not deceive you.

LEW: Ah, these gentlemen say more than they intend. If you give me a son, Seaou-Mei, I will gladly return thanks to heaven with the offering of fresh flowers. I

will invite my neighbours, kill my pigs and sheep. Let them do as they promise for if they do not abuse me, I shall be without a son. What though I should have a deformed son? He would still be a gift from heaven. The time is so long now that I begin to fear that something unfortunate has happened.

(There is a noise heard outside as of someone arriving at the house.)

LEW: What signifies it whether the hour of his birth was lucky or otherwise? For if I can only rock him in his cradle, I shall retire to my grave and become a ghost with readiness.

LE-SHE *(heard outside)*: We are soon arrived. Hing-Wey, tell your master that I have come.

LEW *(calling)*: Hing-Weh?

HING: Sir, for what purpose did you call.

LEW: Do you look to the door and see who has arrived?

HING: Sir, my lady is at the door.

LEW: Has my wife arrived? Hing-Weh, kill a sheep immediately and invite your lady in.

HING *(goes to the door to admit LE-SHE)*: My lady, you are requested to enter.

LE-SHE *(entering, looking somewhat troubled. Speaks as she enters to others outside)*: Children, do you stay at the door. I will go in first. *(Muttering to herself as she comes down stage)*: What can I say to him? *(to LEW)*: Husband, in the solitude of this cottage, your quietude has been undisturbed.

LEW: Welcome, welcome. Have I a son?

LE-SHE: You, you have a son indeed. I will tell you immediately. Do not be too anxious.

LEW: Then speak: I am not anxious.

LE-SHE: Since you came to this cottage, we all, in obedience to your wishes, treated Seaou-Mei with the greatest kindness, neither chastising her nor scolding her. This morning she arose early and, under

pretence of going out to buy something, has gone off altogether.

LEW : Gone ? Alas, you will kill me. This is surely a lie. Tell me the truth and let me rejoice with you.

LE-SHE (*going up C*) : It is true. If you do not believe me, your daughter is at the door.

LEW : Has she come also ? Ask her to come in.

HING (*opening the door for YIN-CHANG*) : My young lady, you are requested to enter.

YIN-CHANG (*speaking to CHANG outside as she enters*) : Chang-Lang, stay at the door ; I will go in first. (*She enters and bows low before her father*).

LEW : Welcome, daughter, welcome. Have you a brother ? You must nurse that brother, you know.

YIN-CHANG : Father, what brother ?

LEW : Seaou-Mei's child. After all, of what consequence is he ? I shall still be fond of you.

YIN-CHANG : Seaou-Mei, without the least provocation, has run away with another man.

LEW : Run away ? Are you both telling the truth ? What is there to fear in my knowing it ? It is all a plan concocted between you and your mother. She said : " Yin-Chang, when you see your father, say that Seaou-Mei has gone away. The good man is old and if you say that he has a son, I fear the joy may kill him." This is the plan between you.

LE-SHE : Seaou-Mei has indeed run away.

LEW : And you venture to tell me such a story ? Of what consequence is Seaou-Mei ? I shall still be fond of you and Chang-Lang.

YIN-CHANG : If you do not believe me, Chang-Lang is at the door.

LEW : My son-in-law is also here ? Make haste and ask him in.

HING (*goes to the door and bows to CHANG*) : Sir, you are requested to enter.

CHANG (*entering*) : Father, you have been very happy here. It is well that you came.

LEW : Welcome, son, welcome. You must take care of your brother-in-law.

CHANG : What brother-in-law ?

LEW : Seaou-Mei's son.

CHANG : Seaou-Mei ? She has, without the least provocation on our part, run away with another man.

LEW (*rise, L.*) : Gone ?

LE-SHE (*comes down to LEW, L.C.*) : If she has gone, she has gone. Why should we deceive you ? Of what consequence is the departure of this girl ?

LEW : What, are you the old mistress of a family, and does not this put you to shame ?

LE-SHE : I have done nothing wrong. Why need I be ashamed ?

LEW : Of your jealousy. When you, a woman and a wife, know not your duty, how can my family respect you ? Through the perverseness of your heart, you show all favour to your son-in-law. The whole of my property is in your hands and engages all your attention without satisfying you, covetous and greedy as you are. This last blow will be the death of me.

LE-SHE (*laughing*) : Alas, what folly to grieve for one who, without the least provocation, made off in such a shameful way ?

LEW (*crossing up R., then down C.*) : How vain have been my hopes ? Can you thus speak of her without considering my age ? Chang-Lang, go to the four gates of the city and set up a notice that if any poor and distressed people will come to-morrow at break of day to Kae-Yuen Temple, I will distribute money among them. Be witness, heaven, that I have at last repented. I have no son, and my hopes of posterity are cut off. Chang-Lang, hasten to give out the notice.

CHANG : I obey (*exit R followed by YIN-CHANG*).

LE-SHE : So you are going to squander your money on bestowing alms ? If you should not do so, no one will notice you, and if you do so, who will respect you the more ?

LEW : Know you not that those whom I relieve will offer incense to me and treat me as they do their ancestors ?

LE-SHE : But even if you should do all these good things, recollect that you are old and have not long to live. When you are dead, who will remember you ?

LEW : You say that because I am in the evening of my days, it will be useless. When I am dead, inter my body on the brow of some unfrequented hill, plant the fir and cypress thickly around, then if you fear posterity will not know it, write my history plainly on my tomb. Those who happen to pass will look at it with sorrow and exclaim : " This is he who distributed money at Kae-Yuen Temple."

LE-SHE : I believe you are right, husband. Let us return home.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT III.

SCENE. The entrance to a Buddhist Temple. The voices of the monks are heard chanting inside. Chang-Lang stands at the gateway and counts out money from little silken bags which Hing-Weh is holding for him.

CHANG : My father-in-law desired me to get some money to distribute in this Temple, giving to the aged beggars an ounce, to the younger ones, half an ounce. It is all ready and I must call the old people to distribute it. Here they come.

(*Lew enters, followed by LE-SHE and YIN-CHANG.*)

LEW : Do you take the money you have provided and when any beggars come, distribute it for me. It was wealth that led me to spend half my life in disquietude. For ten whole years I rested neither night nor day, and all for the sake of money which poured in on me. Oh, wealth, that I might build a temple where all might be supplied with thee. When I was young, sometimes I was ready to deprive others of it, even by force, nay even to make desperate use of the dagger for the sake of increasing my little fortune.

LE-SHE : It is for the sake of money that we mortals leave our families and homes ; that the father and son consent to live as far distant as the North from the South.

LEW : It was for wealth and with killing pain that I left my parents, that with bitter anguish I parted from my parents.

LE-SHE : It was certainly not with ease that you accumulated your money.

LEW, *followed by the two women, enters the Temple.*

CHANG-LANG *is left alone for a little. Then a group of beggars enter. In turn they go up to CHANG, fall on their knees and when they have received their share, drop down L.*

FIRST BEGGAR : Comrade, they are about to distribute money at Kae-Yuen Temple. Let us proceed thither to ask for some of it, and say that this son of yours is a third person distinct from us. When we have got a share for him, let us divide it and buy some wine. (*Sees CHANG*). Sir, we crave your bounty.

CHANG : Does this boy belong to you two ?

FIRST BEGGAR : No, he has no concern with us.

CHANG : Then, here is half an ounce for him.

FIRST BEGGAR : Comrade, let us divide this and buy some wine with it.

SECOND BEGGAR : This boy is my son ; what have you to do with dividing my property ? You know that he is my son.

FIRST BEGGAR : Wretch, did we not agree to divide it ?
Why should you have all though you have a son ?

SECOND BEGGAR : Buy wine with my money, would you ? You son of a one-eyed mother ; may her shade starve in a forgotten tomb.

FIRST BEGGAR : You daughter of a beggar's son, your father was a robber, a leper, a sonless mis-shapen dog.

SECOND BEGGAR : Your father ate cats and your mother was shameless : she had twenty daughters and stole you from a slave and passed you off as your father's son.

LEW has come to the door of the Temple, and listened to the beggars, now he speaks :

LEW : What is the meaning of all this noise ?

CHANG : Sir, these beggars are quarrelling about the money you have given them.

LEW : Beggars, son, are not the only people who quarrel about money for the rich sometimes do the same thing. Cease, cease, when I am giving you money, do you fight and quarrel without any regard for my presence ?

SECOND BEGGAR : Childless wretch, how dare you try to get my money ?

CHANG : Silence, beggars.

LEW : Those words made my flesh tremble. " Childless wretch." My heart feels as if it has been sprinkled with hot oil.

FIRST BEGGAR : Sir, the father begged a share of the money and the son wants another.

LEW : So—do they not consider that what is ill-obtained can profit them nothing ?

SECOND BEGGAR : My son has been thus indulged from his infancy.

LEW : From his infancy, you should have instructed him better instead of letting him act thus, for it is only when the parents are rich that the children may be humoured.

THE BOY : Father, are you hungry ?

FIRST BEGGAR : Yes, I am hungry enough.

BOY : Then let us go and eat something and come back again.

SECOND BEGGAR : You say well, child. Let us go and get something to eat.

(The beggars all slink off and LEW returns into the Temple. After a little, YIN-SUN enters, coming towards the Temple.)

YIN-SUN : Since my uncle's wife drove me from the house, I have spent the whole of the hundred ounces which they gave me. I am now living among the ovens of an earthenware maker's and I sleep upon the warm cinders. I have had a breakfast but have nothing left for a supper. They say that my uncle and aunt are distributing money from this Kae-Yuen Temple. If they give their alms to all who come, surely they will not refuse their own nephew. But if I go, I am afraid of meeting Chang-Lang who will certainly favour me with his sneering remarks. However, I must not mind that now *(sees CHANG)*. Oh, heaven, my bad luck. There stands Chang-Lang now at the entrance. What is to be done. I am almost ashamed to be seen by him, but there is no alternative so I had better speak to him. Chang-Lang ? *(YIN-SUN goes L.C.)*

CHANG : Whence comes this smell of poverty ? Who can it be ? Oh, it is Yin-Sun. What, come you for money, wretch ?

YIN-SUN : It is true that I am very poor, but wherefore this "smell of poverty" ? Cousin, I have come to ask for a little relief.

CHANG : You are too late. The money is all distributed ; there is none left for you so make haste and be off.

(LEW, followed by the two women, comes out of the Temple.)

LEW : Who is at the door ?

CHANG : It is Yin-Sun, sir.

LEW : What does he come here for ?

CHANG : He comes to beg a little money.

LE-SHE : If he comes to beg for money, say there is none for him.

LEW : What resentment can you harbour towards a beggar ?

LE-SHE : If the wretch should see our money, he would want it all ; we have none to spare for him.

LEW : Tell him to come forward. Yin-Sun, what brought you to this place ?

YIN-SUN : Hearing, sir, that you were distributing money, your nephew came to borrow a little of it.

LEW : Wife, I do not ask how much, but only lend him a little.

LE-SHE : Yin-Sun, if you wish to borrow money, you must first find out three people ; one to be your security, one a witness and the third, a notary. Find these three persons and then I'll lend you the money ; if not, I'll lend you nothing.

LEW : What do you want with all this formality with a relation of the family ?

LE-SHE : In case he should happen to die, pray who would refund me the money.

CHANG : That's right, mother, you say very rightly.

LEW : Peace, you ugly fellow. How does it concern you ?

LE-SHE : What, are you afraid that we shall frighten your worthy nephew out of his senses ?

LEW (*points to CHANG*) : Wife, let me ask a question or two. Who is he ?

LE-SHE : He is my son-in-law.

LEW : And who is Yin-Sun ?

LE-SHE : He is your worthless nephew abounding in faults.

LEW : He is my own nephew, is he not ? If I wish to correct or reprove him, I may do it, and it has no concern with you.

LE-SHE : Oh, pray cease your anger and let me entreat your superior instructions.

LEW : Yin-Sun ?

YIN-SUN : Your nephew is here, sir.

LE-SHE : Oh, if you wish to correct him, you may do it. What does this Yin-Sun mean ? Do bring a little clay for fear his precious skull should sustain some injury.

LEW : Are you waiting to see me put him to death ?

LE-SHE : Who ordered you to commit murder ?

(YIN-CHANG *enters from the Temple, goes to LEW's side, R.E.*)

LEW : What is to be done in all this bustle ? Give me those keys.

LE-SHE : There are the keys ; they are at your command.

LEW : YIN-SUN, do you see ?

YIN-SUN : I see, sir.

LEW : Daughter and son-in-law, do you receive these keys and take charge of my family.

LE-SHE : Children, give thanks to your father.

LEW : You see, they are very well pleased.

CHANG (*comes down R.*) : Many thanks to you, father. You see, Yin-Sun, all the keys are in my possession.

LEW : What has become of the money I gave you ?

YIN-SUN : I met some intimate friends and spent the money with them.

LE-SHE : So, vile creature, you have your intimate friends, have you ?

LEW : Alas, child, it is not yet time for you to have intimate friends. When you had a little money, you treated your friends and squandered it away and now you are moneyless.

YIN-SUN : Your nephew, sir, came to request a small sum in order that he might set up in some trade.

LEW : Yin-Sun, my child, this is not so good nor so suitable as studying.

YIN-SUN : Trade, uncle, I assure you, will pay better.

LEW : I tell you the qualifications of a scholar are high but the talents for trading need be but small. If you succeed in trade, from a little money you make much, but if you study letters, your plebian garments are changed for a scholar's gown ; over your head will be carried the round umbrella, before your horses will be marshalled the two files of attendants. Think of the toil of those who traffic and you will see the difference. Chang-Lang, let the carriage be brought and let my wife and daughter go home first. I will follow afterwards.

CHANG : It is all ready, sir.

LEW : Wife, do you go home first with Yin-Chang. This lad Yin-Sun does not think correctly and I wish to show him his duty.

LE-SHE : You can come at your leisure. I will go home first. *(She exits, accompanied by her daughter and son-in-law, then she noiselessly re-appears and watches LEW.)*

LEW : Child, I have a great regard for you.

YIN-SUN : I know it, uncle.

LEW : Alas, my sorrow will kill me *(weeps)*.

LE-SHE *(coming down)* : Husband, what is the matter ?
Why are you weeping ?

LEW : When did I weep ?

LE-SHE : The tears are dropping from your eyes.

LEW : Alas, at my age how could they be free from moisture ?

LE-SHE : This weakness seems to have come very suddenly upon you.

LEW (*up C. and Down, aside to YIN-SUN*) : In my boot there are two pieces of silver ; take them out and begone. (*Aloud*) Yin-Sun, be regular in your visits to the graves of your ancestors and in one or two years, you will no doubt become rich.

YIN-SUN : Your nephew will obey you, sir.

LEW : The duties which during our lives we owe our parents, I need not tell you. Now that yours are dead, hasten and instruct yourself how to honour their shades. Alas, I have no son to do this for me. YIN-SUN, follow the good advice I give you. Once in each day visit their tombs for me (*exit*).

LE-SHE : You poor ugly wretch. What business have you here ? It would do my eyes good to see you die this minute. If you come again to my doors, I will have you cut into pieces. You will make me die of rage. Husband, will you please to come with me.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT IV.

SCENE—A room in Lew's house.

AT RISE : YIN-CHANG comes on with a bundle, looks cautiously around, then claps her hands softly. A servant enters and she gives him the bundle and a bag of money, then points off, dismissing him. She goes and lies down on a divan and starts work on some embroidery. There is a moment's stillness before CHANG-LANG enters. He goes to a table where he has evidently been working on money accounts ; he sits down and starts writing, then speaks.

CHANG : Though a man's destiny is fixed at his birth, it is still necessary for him to adopt a little scheming. If I did not keep in practice my deceitful arts, who would take money and present it to me ? Since my father-in-law gave me the care of his property, I have been very well contented. It is now the

commencement of the Tsing-Ming and everyone goes to perform his duties and make oblations at the tombs of his ancestors. I must hasten with those dried hams and other meat offerings and take with me the village officer to the tombs.

VILLAGE OFFICER: I am the village officer. To-day, being the commencement of the Tsing-Ming, I have received Chang-Lang's invitation to go to the tombs.

CHANG: Here I am, ready to proceed with you. Wife, we have hitherto gone every year to visit the tombs of your family first. Let us this year first proceed to those of my ancestors.

YIN-CHANG: No, Chang-Lang, it is proper that we should go to the tombs of my family first.

VILLAGE OFFICER: You are in the wrong. Though your name be Lew and your husband's Chang, you should still go first to the tombs of his family. That would be the most correct plan.

CHANG: Wife, within a hundred years after our marriage, you will be interred in the tombs of my ancestors. Therefore let us proceed, first, to them.

YIN-CHANG: I yield. Let us proceed thither first (*they exit*).

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE—A roadway. Yin-Sun is seen walking slowly along, carrying an iron hoe, a jar of wine, some gilt paper and a cake. He is very dejected and his garments look worn and dusty.

YIN-SUN: Since the day when my uncle gave me the two pieces of silver, I have been living about the potteries. Now it is the season of the Tsing-Ming, and all ranks, both great and small, perform the sacred rites at the tombs of their respective families. My uncle said to me: "If you diligently honour the graves of your ancestors, in one or two years, you will become rich." Surely he must have deposited some treasure there. When I reflect that my own ancestors, beside my

father and mother are buried there, it would be strange if I should wait until my uncle told me to go. Though I am poor, I am still a scholar and could not possibly be deficient in this essential point of duty. I have been to the paper shop and obtained some gilt paper by singing. I have been to the wine shop and procured this half jar of wine and this cake of bread. From a neighbour I have borrowed this iron hoe and will now proceed to the tombs and perform the rites, to burn the paper and trim the earth round the graves, and to perform the other ceremonies and oblations and thus fulfil the duties of a son.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE—The place of the Tombs. Three graves are seen on the stage. They are very neglected looking. They are the tombs of Yin-Sun's parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

AT RISE : YIN-SUN *is hoeing the earth around them.*

YIN-SUN: Ye parents of my father, your lives being ended after death, be ye immortal. I make this oblation to your shades. My parents, why do I repeat this maxim? Those who have property should put aside one portion in ten for their children. I repeat this because you made use of all your property and now I suffer severely for it. Yin-Sun has no other way of performing the duties of filial piety than by throwing a little fresh earth on the graves (*throws on earth*). Now I may proceed to the rites of oblation. If I offer this cake only to the shades of my grandfather and grandmother, the shades of my own parents will have none. What is to be done to prevent their contending for it? I will divide the cake and offer half to the one and half to the other (*burns the paper*). I am now to eat what remains. One hundred and five days after the solstice, observe with what splendour the rich perform the rites of the tombs. I alone am poor and destitute. The graves of my

ancestors are not heaped with dried hams and other meat offerings, nor with fragrant wines. This wine is cold and not fit to drink. I will go to one of the neighbouring cottages and warm it (*he exits down L*).

(*After YIN-SUN has gone off, LEW, followed by LE-SHE, come on from the opposite direction.*)

LEW : I fear the children have not yet arrived.

LE-SHE : I tell you that they went before us. They must have arrived a long while ago.

LEW : Well, let us go on. These surely are the tombs of my ancestors but you see neither the tents pitched, the sheep killed, the cakes prepared, the wines heated nor the dried hams and other meat offerings. What will happen to the shades of our ancestors and relations ?

LE-SHE : I am afraid that our children have been loitering on the journey.

LEW : At your time of life, wife, you should not tell me all these stories.

LE-SHE : I have indeed been much mistaken.

LEW : Alas, the sight of these tombs is enough to grieve one. Do you see that over the graves, and places of offering, from the walls of brick and earth, are springing up thorns and briars ? Where are the Pe Yang and La Yang trees ? Wife, does it not seem that someone has just been here ?

LE-SHE : If anyone has been here, it must have been some needy wretch.

LEW : He and I are equally miserable. It must be owing to so much rain having fallen that so few have come to the tombs. Wife, since our children have not arrived, let us begin the performance of our oblations.

(*LEW and LE-SHE stand in the attitude of prayer before each of the graves.*)

LE-SHE : You say well ; let us old people perform our adorations before the tombs until they come.

LEW : Wife, first perform the rites here.

LE-SHE : Who are buried here ?

LEW : They are the parents of my father.

LE-SHE : Parents of my husband's father, bestow your favourable influence on our family. Parents of my husband's father, soon may you ascend to the immortal mansions.

LEW : Now let our adorations be performed here.

LE-SHE : Who are buried here ?

LEW : My own parents.

LE-SHE : Parents of my husband, your lives being ended after death, be ye immortal.

LEW : Now here.

LE-SHE : Who are these ?

LEW : They are my younger brother and his wife, the parents of Yin-Sun.

LE-SHE : Are these the graves of Yin-Sun's father and mother ? Then you advise me wrongly. They are my inferiors ; I am much above them. How then can I make oblations at their tombs ?

LEW : While they lived it is true that they were our inferiors, but now they are dead. Say then but this : Your lives being ended, be ye immortal. For my sake wife, perform this supplication. (*He is very tired and goes and sits on a mound some distance from the grave.*)

LE-SHE : Well, I will obey you. Ye two of the younger branch of Lew, listen to me in your graves. Remember that in your lives, you relied on the partiality of your father and mother and injured us two. You happened, however, to draw the shortest lot and here you are dead, leaving behind you Yin-Sun, who is always haunting our doors. May he soon be crippled or killed in the road, run over or trampled to death and thus gratify my eyes.

LEW : When will you finish praying over that grave ?

LE-SHE : Eh ? When did I open my mouth ? (*Comes and sits down beside LEW.*)

LEW : Wife, where shall we two be buried a hundred years hence ?

LE-SHE : I have chosen a spot upon the brow of yonder hill. Do you observe the tall trees like so many umbrellas ? It is there we shall be buried an hundred years hence.

LEW : I am afraid it will not be possible for us to be interred there.

LE-SHE : Why not ? Where then shall we be buried.

LEW : I repeat it, wife, it will not be possible. We shall be buried in yonder spot (*pointing*).

LE-SHE : In that low, wet, desolate place ? I will never consent to be buried there.

LEW : A hundred years hence, when our bodies are deeply buried, though our tombs may be turned to the right aspect, we shall still be interred in that desolate spot. On the 1st and 15th of the month, who will weepingly deck our tombs with gilded paper, or burn incense to our memory ? Wife, the reason why we cannot be buried in yonder spot is because we have no son.

LE-SHE : How not a son ? Have we not our son-in-law and daughter ?

LEW : Ah, I had forgotten them. Come, as our children have not yet arrived, let us chat a little together. Now let me ask you, wife, what is my surname.

LE-SHE : Alas, the poor man becomes foolish in his old age. He has forgotten his own surname. Your surname is Lew and you are called Lew Yuen-Wae.

LEW : My surname is Lew. Good—and what is yours.

LE-SHE : My surname is Le.

LEW : Mine is Lew—yours is Le. But how came you to be one of my family.

LE-SHE : Do you really not know ? For what purpose then were all the go-betweens and witnesses, the feasts and marriage presents but to make me your lawful wife and one of your own family ?

LEW : Do people when they meet you call you Madame Lew or Madame Le ?

LE-SHE : How stupid the old man has grown. If I wed a fowl, I must fly after it. If I wed a dog I must run after it. If I wed a clod of earth, I must sit down and guard it. While you and I live we have the same roof ; when we are dead, we shall have the same grave. I belong altogether to your family. How then should anyone call me Madame Le ?

LEW : It seems that you are one of my family. And what is our daughter's surname ?

LE-SHE : Her name is also Lew. She is Lew Yin-Chang.

LEW : What is our son-in-law's name ?

LE-SHE : It is Chang : he is Chang-Lang.

LEW : Now, let me ask you, wife. Will our daughter an hundred years hence be laid in the tombs of Lew or of Chang ?

LE-SHE : She will be laid in those of Chang. Alas, husband, why do you talk about that ? True it is that without a son we are without support. There will be no one to come to our graves with offerings of cake, wine, ham, dried meats—there will be no one to perform the sacred rites before our tombs.

LEW : You comprehend then at last ?

LE-SHE : How fortunate it would be if one of our own family should come to the tombs ?

(YIN-SUN comes back to the place of the Tombs holding his jug of wine.)

LE-SHE : Ah, Yin-Sun, whence come you, child ? Why have you not been to eat at your uncle's table lately ? Your uncle is here, too.

YIN-SUN : Your nephew came to pay adoration at the tombs of his family. I hope you do not mean to chastise me for it ?

LE-SHE : I do not wish to chastise you, child. Husband, a younger branch of the Lew has come.

LEW : What ? Who ?

LE-SHE : Yin-Sun, our nephew.

LEW : Then call him Yin-Sun. Why style him a younger branch of Lew ?

LE-SHE : Because he is too old to be called by the name of his childhood.

LEW : Yin-Sun, why did you come here ?

YIN-SUN : Your nephew came to perform the sacred rites, to do adoration at the tombs of his family.

LEW : Wife, do you hear ?

LE-SHE : Yes, husband, he came to perform the rites of the tombs.

LEW : Yin-Sun, who burnt this paper ?

YIN-SUN : It was your nephew who burnt the paper.

LE-SHE : Yes, our nephew.

LEW : Who threw on the earth ?

YIN-SUN : Your nephew, sir.

LEW : Yin-Sun says, wife, that he threw on the earth.

LE-SHE : I heard that also, husband.

LEW : You performed the rites, but if you had not come there is someone else who would. I must chastise this poor wretch.

LE-SHE : Why will you chastise our nephew ?

LEW : Wife, let me alone. Yin-Sun, look upon my wife and me as equal to your father and mother.

LE-SHE : Husband, do not chastise him.

LEW : Ah, thou worthless woman. Arrest not the staff that is raised for his correction. I punish him for the

reason that when he performed the rites, he did not do it with liberality, but came to offer at these tombs in this shameful manner.

LE-SHE : Husband, when you have spoken to him, when you have reproved him, then chastise him.

LEW : Let me alone, wife, I would chastise him first, then parley with him. Yin-Sun, was it you who has been here to the tombs ?

YIN-SUN : It was your nephew.

LEW : Then why did you not fetch a tent, kill the sheep, prepare the cakes and the hot wine as well as the dried hams and other meat offerings ?

LE-SHE : The old man is quite amusing. Your nephew is without money and destitute of food and clothing. Where then, was he to find all this ?

LEW : You say he has no money. Yin-Sun, observe.

YIN-SUN : What is it you wish your nephew to observe ?

LEW : Why did you not go to those lofty edifices and those tombs adorned with stone figures of goats and tigers instead of coming here ?

LE-SHE : Husband, what are you saying ? Those tombs with the figures of goats and tigers, they belong to the family of Chang and Le. Yin-Sun is the immediate descendant of our family Lew. Why then should he not come to our tombs ?

LEW : Who is the immediate descendant ?

LE-SHE : Yin-Sun.

LEW : I do not know that Yin-Sun is the immediate descendant of our family. I say that our daughter and son-in-law are.

LE-SHE : The more I concede to you, the more unreasonable you become. Among mankind where shall we find one who is quite without fault ? I have hitherto been very obstinate. Nephew, I remember that I have both chastised and upbraided you, but from this day hence I will supply all your wants. Cease then to remember my former harshness.

YIN-SUN : My aunt says that I must become one of the family and that she will supply all my wants.

LEW : Who says so ?

YIN-SUN : My aunt.

LEW : Oh, heaven, this must be a dream. This happy event has come from the skies. A foolish woman has returned to her senses.

YIN-SUN : I have to thank you, uncle.

LEW : Don't pay your respects to me but to your reformed aunt yonder. Behold those two weeping ; their tears flowing from the emotion of their hearts. Yesterday, you suffered from her anger ; from now on you need not toil for your living.

(CHANG-LANG, *his wife and their servants bearing the provisions, appear.*)

LEW : What family are going to their tombs with such a crowd ? Wife, it is our son-in-law at length arrived. Let us go and eat of the provisions.

LE-SHE : Where have you been, you worthless couple, that you come so late ?

LEW : Wife, be quiet. How does this matter concern our son-in-law ? Question your dutiful daughter yonder.

LE-SHE : Child, why did I upbraid you just now ? It was because your father was vexed with you. Why have you not put on a better garment ?

YIN-CHANG : These are surely good enough, mother.

LE-SHE : Give me the keys. The next time you must provide better clothes for the occasion.

CHANG : Wife, will you be so deceived ?

YIN-CHANG : I am not afraid. I know my mother is favourable towards me. Here are the keys.

LE-SHE : Worthless couple, do you never come near my doors again. Husband, I have got the keys.

LEW : Son-in-law, depart from my house. Daughter, return to your husband's dwelling. May you do

well together and Lang again find his Ming-Kwang. Go now and carry out your schemes somewhere else but forbear to darken my doors. I no longer require you for a support, Chang-Lang.

LE-SHE : Husband, here are the keys. Do you take charge of the family as before ; I am old.

LEW : You say you are old but I also am not young. Wife, do you take our family matters in hand.

LE-SHE : What, am I still eighteen ? The care of the family belongs to you.

LEW : No, it belongs to you.

LE-SHE : While we are considering, here stands one who may take the charge, our kin, our child, Yin-Sun. What is your opinion ?

LEW : It will be a little too soon.

LE-SHE : I think it is full time.

LEW : You are right, wife.

LE-SHE : Yin-Sun, I deliver the keys to you : take charge of all the family.

YIN-SUN : Thanks to you, my aunt. Chang-Lang, away ; I cannot endure the smell of poverty.

CHANG : So you have not forgotten a single word.

LEW : Son-in-law, hope for no more of my money. Daughter, you should have performed your duties to your parents and have performed the rites at the tombs. All would then have been well. Wretch, are you to be attended with crowds while I am alone and forsaken ? Your conduct was short-sighted. I see further ; the fortunes are now entrusted to one of the Lew family. Daughter, you need not again seek your father and mother.

LE-SHE : Let us depart.

LEW : I will go with you. Forbear to quarrel and contend with them. The ancients say a daughter is born to be of another family. When they come to our house forbear to argue with them.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT V.

SCENE—A room in Lew's house.

(YIN-SUN holds the household keys and gives an order to a servant. The door opens, CHANG-LANG and YIN-CHANG enter carrying flowers. They hold a short conversation with YIN-SUN and then hurry off the way they came, as they hear LEW coming.)

CHANG : This is our father's birthday and we have come to pay our respects to him. We have arrived at the door, cousin.

YIN-SUN : Whence comes this smell of poverty ?
Where do you come from ?

CHANG : I do not reproach you with poverty now. We come to wait upon our father.

YIN-SUN : I will announce your arrival. Sir, my two cousins have arrived.

LEW : Who ?

YIN-SUN : My two cousins.

LEW : You say that my daughter and her husband are at the door ? Why permit them to enter ? Ask them whose money they received and at whose tombs they sacrificed ? If they enter, it will be plain that we cannot keep our word.

YIN-SUN : My aunt and uncle, be above feeling resentment towards them.

LEW : If you allow these two to enter, you will anger me and I shall punish you.

LE-SHE : Husband, these two children possess some idea of duty. Indulge them a little.

LEW : You say they are dutiful. Then I am a silly old fellow and angry without reason. Yin-Sun, go and say their business has no concern with me. If they cannot be received into their own family, it is their own doing. Yin-Sun, go and say that if there be

anyone as nearly related to me as you, he is desired to enter.

(YIN-SUN goes to the door and speaks off.)

YIN-SUN : My uncle says if there is anyone as nearly related as I, he is desired to enter.

(YIN-SUN stands aside for SEAOU-MEI and her little son to enter. YIN-CHANG pushes them in and then disappears.)

YIN-CHANG : Seaou-Mei, go with your child to see my father.

SEAOU-MEI : Yin-Chang has desired me to bring in the child to see his father. (to LEW) Sir, Seaou-Mei has come with your child.

LEW : Is this not Seaou-Mei ? From whence come you ?

SEAOU-MEI : Have you in three years forgotten an acquaintance of many ?

LEW : Seaou-Mei, you were most closely attached to us. How could you run away with another man, you worthless creature ? Know you not that man and wife for a day is a union for life ?

SEAOU-MEI : I have brought you your son.

LEW : Who is my son ?

SEAOU-MEI : Is not this he ?

LEW : Yes, surely he is my son. Wife, I have now found one who will mourn for us. Child, call me father.

CHILD : Father.

LEW : Ah, that sound has transported me. Yin-Sun, tell my daughter and her husband to come here.

YIN-SUN goes to the door and calls YIN-CHANG and her husband. They enter.

LEW : Daughter, where has Seaou-Mei been these last three years ?

YIN-CHANG : Father, listen while I tell you the whole history. Chang-Lang, thinking that perhaps Seaou-

Mei would have a son, was seized with a fit of jealousy and wished to make away with her. Your daughter, reflecting that you were old and that if anything happened to Séaou-Mei, your posterity would be cut off, concealed her in a safe place and brought up the child. For these three years, whatever they required, both as to food and clothing, was secretly provided by your daughter. Repenting of your former kindness, you took away all the keys from my charge, but from this day let your anger cease against your daughter. Though you have a dutiful nephew, how can he be compared with your own child ?

LEW : How was I to know all this, child, without your telling me ? Since it is thus, you have indeed acted as my daughter, but my former displeasure was not without excuse. My son-in-law yonder is of another house, but my daughter is worthy to be recognised by her family.

LE-SHE : Who would have thought that Lew Yuen Wae would have a son ? Now we need not fear being buried in that damp spot, for our family has a representative.

YIN-CHANG : Father, though you have this day found a son, do not cease to remember your daughter.

YIN-SUN : Since you have a son, I return all the keys to you, uncle.

LEW : My daughter, my nephew and my son, I take the whole of my property and will divide it between you, for by the favour of heaven I have an heir in my old age.

(The curtain falls on the picture of LEW seated near LE-SHE, who holds the little son near her. YIN-CHANG stands near her father also looking happy. YIN-SUN and SEAOU-MEI stand meekly at the back, and CHANG-LANG remains disconsolately at the door.)

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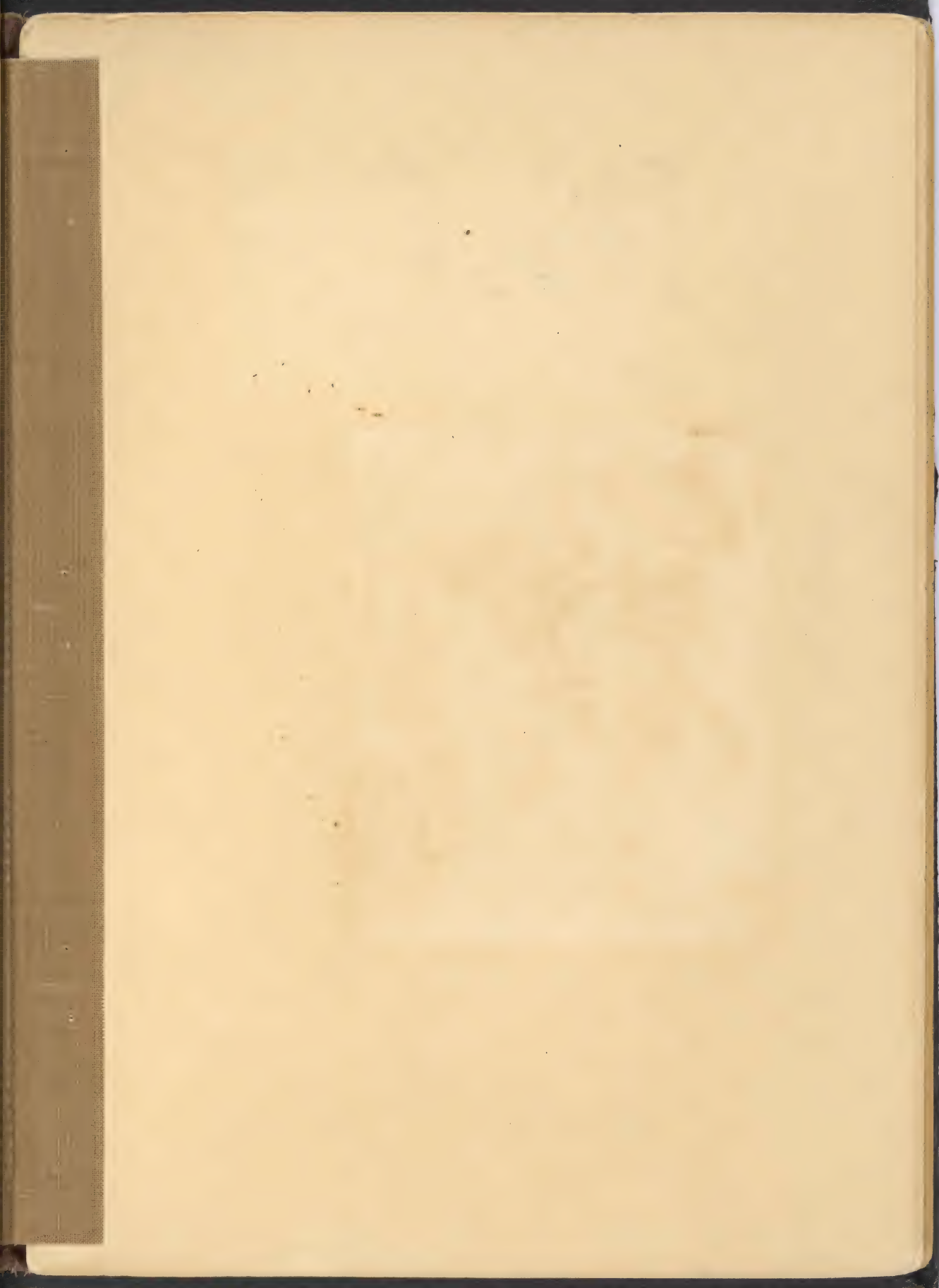
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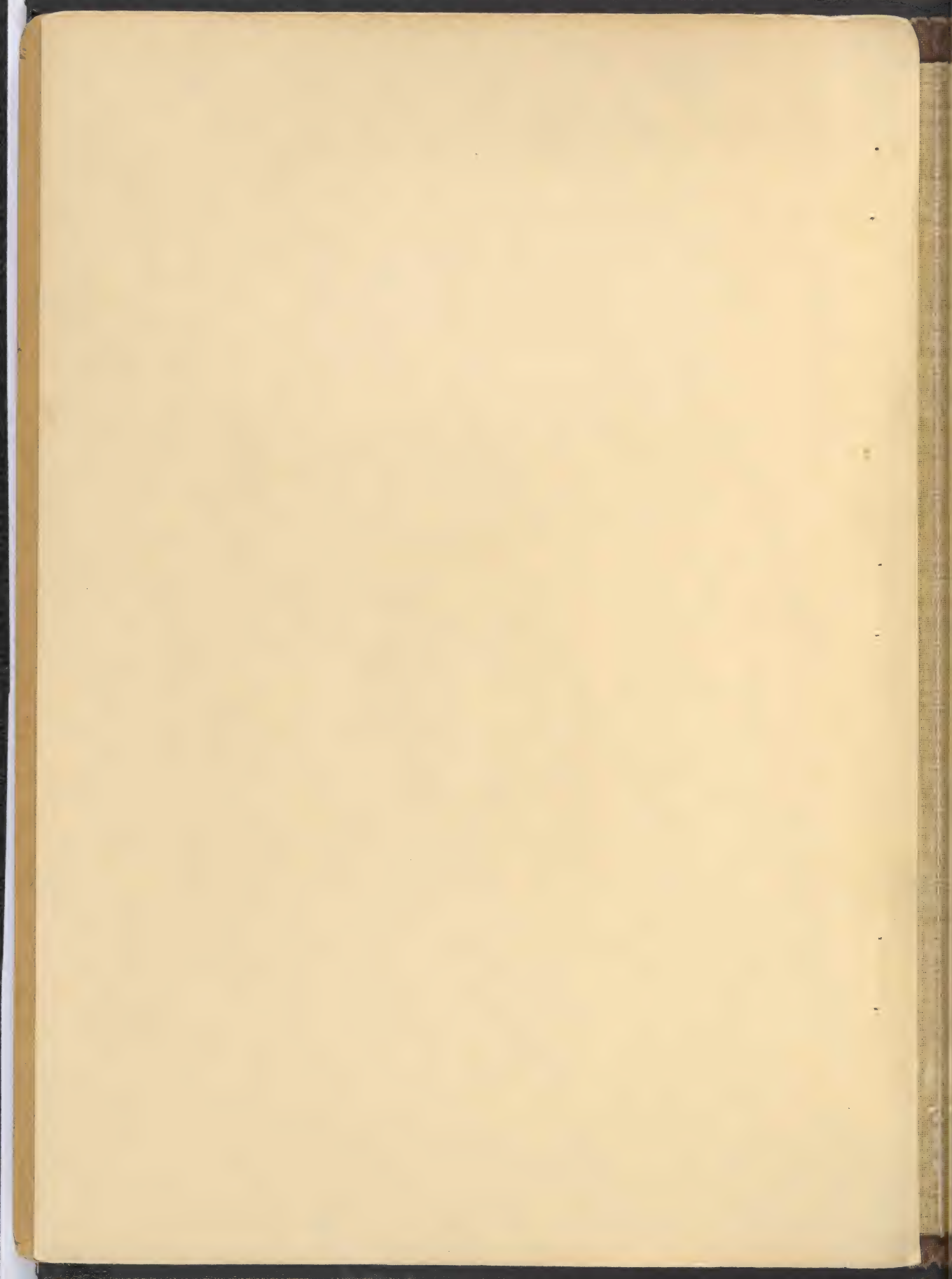
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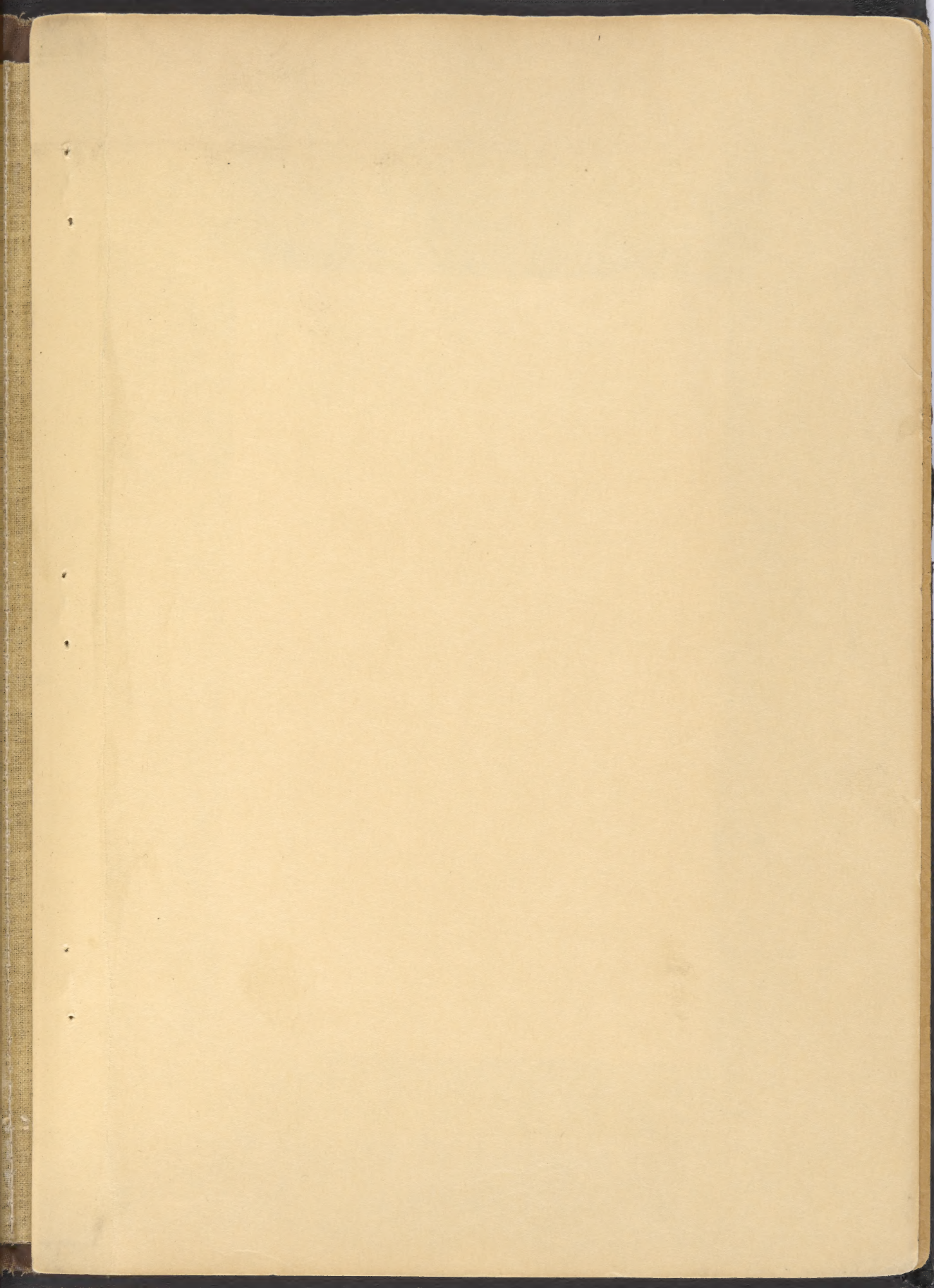
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